



Information & Inspiration at Our Annual Meeting and Awards

DDRC's Annual meeting wasn't all business, as important as it was to hear reporting from our leadership, approve meeting minutes, and elect Board members.

Susan Hartley, DDRC Board President and parent, gave a profoundly moving talk. She shared the story of her son with disabilities, his significant needs, the insights she and her family gained in their parenting journey, and the beneficial role DDRC played. Her words asked us to imagine and recognize that every person is perfect as they are.

We also celebrated our wonderful awardees. Nick Mitchell, a person with disabilities, received the DDRC Hero Award for his determination and growth. Nick has participated in DDRC day programs, resides in a host home and works at Fairfield Inn (Denver West Federal Center). His career journey began with support from DDRC's Employment Services. Over time, his confidence and competence grew, and he decided he was ready to pivot away from those services. Our Employment Services team is gratified to see that Nick has achieved so much! Listen to Nick talk about why his job, his Fairfield team, and his sense of independence mean so much to him in this video, where Nick appears midway through. [Video](#)

A sincere and deep gratitude to our Elected Officials of the Year – the Jefferson County [Board of County Commissioners](#). Congratulations to Commissioner Andy Kerr, Commissioner Lesley Dahlkemper, and Commissioner Tracy Kraft-Tharp. Their wisdom, caring and support of DDRC over years and particularly during the last two plus years regarding Case Management Redesign and the new role of Jefferson County Human Services as the Case Management Agency has been invaluable, and so important for the people we serve!

The [West Metro Chamber](#) of Commerce was awarded our Partner of the Year for their collaboration with DDRC's Spring into Awareness to promote disability employment and inclusion, as well as their support for nonprofits, and for facilitating learning and connections across the community.

Our terrific staff were also recognized, with Liz Pahr, DDRC Director of Resource Coordination, receiving the Special Recognition Award, and Heather Hagen, Assistant Director of Employment Services receiving the Charlie Allinson Award. They both have been steadfast in leading their areas with excellence, and navigating change and innovation.

Three of our Direct Service Professionals received the Peg Johnstone Above and Beyond Award for their impactful and caring work, sponsored by the Developmental Disabilities Foundation. Awardees included Malik Clark and Dezirae Gurule, both Employment Specialists, and Mamadou Ouattara, Lead Counselor, Residential Services.

Congratulations and thank you to all the awardees!